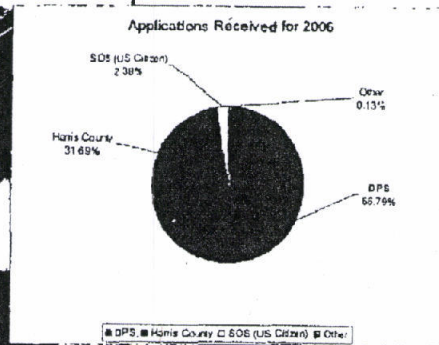


## Voter Registration – Then and Now

In 1998, there were tens of thousands of deceased persons, felons, duplicates, and out-of-county voters on the voter roll

Compared voter roll to DPS Drivers License list, Social Security Death Index, National Change-of-Address files, etc. and mailed confirmation notices to clean up the voter roll



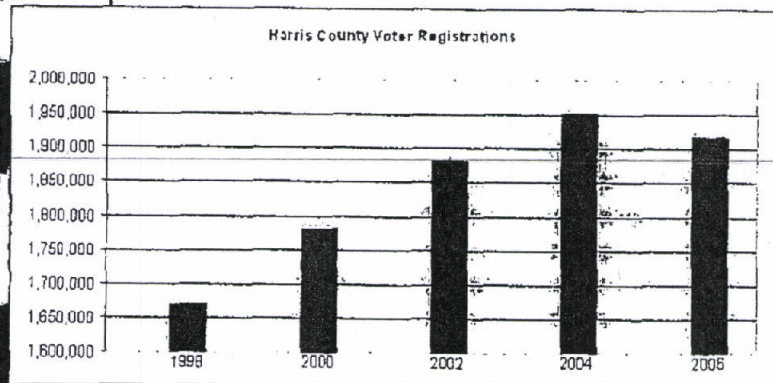
Posted all 1.9 million voter registration records on the Internet for public access


Audited the voter roll after elections to inform the public and election officials

Developed DPS training techniques since they register 65.79% of all voter through "motor-voter"

## Harris County Voter Registration Totals

- ✓ Maintain a voter roll of 1,916,126 registered voters, registered as of October 10, 2006
- ✓ 350,386 voters on suspense





### **Keeping the voter roll clean safeguards the integrity of elections**

1. Make "cleaning the roll" a year-round activity
2. Audit the poll books immediately after each election
3. Communicate with individuals about problems with their information
4. Make information accessible
5. Educate election judges
6. Take a public stand and be prepared for criticism, as well as praise
7. Be "techno smart"



### **1. Make "cleaning the roll" a year-round activity**

- ✓ Be proactive by mailing to voters who change their address with the US Postal Service before they contact us
- ✓ Purge voter roll of:
  - Duplicate registrations
  - Registrations of voters who have moved out of the county
  - Felons in time of service
  - Deceased persons
  - Mentally incompetent individuals
  - Those who indicated "Not a Citizen" on jury questionnaire
- ✓ The Tax Office worked with DPS to reduce their error rate from 24% in 1999 to less than 1% in 2002

## **2. Audit the poll books immediately after each election**

- ✓ Inform the district attorney and attorney general promptly  
Texas Election Code, Section 15.028 Notice of unlawful voting to prosecutor  
  
(a) If the registrar determines that a person who is not a registered voter voted in an election, the registrar shall execute and deliver to the county or district attorney having jurisdiction in the territory covered by the election an affidavit stating the relevant facts  
  
(b) If the election covers territory in more than one county, the registrar shall also deliver an affidavit to the attorney general
- ✓ Auditing preserves the integrity of the roll, reveals any problem area, and provides information for the public and election officials

## **3. Communicate with voters about their information**

- ✓ Give them notice that their registration is under examination, and tell them why
- ✓ When the voter's registration has been cancelled, send a written notice to that person giving the reason for the cancellation
- ✓ Explain to voters that HAVA has the Secretary of State maintaining the statewide voter roll



#### **4. Make information accessible**

- ✓ Election officials can instantly verify voter registration information either online or by phone
- ✓ Harris County voter registrations are on our Web site, unless the voter requests, in writing, to be omitted
- ✓ Direct phone line for election officials
- ✓ Our office successfully fielded 51,000 calls during the 2004 November General Election
- ✓ Expecting 17,000 calls this November General Election from the public and election judges with an average wait time of 3-4 seconds

#### **5. Educate Election Judges**

- ✓ Election judges are nearly volunteers at low hourly wage; they deserve maximum support in the field with the voters
- ✓ Election day training for election judges
- ✓ Direct phone line for election judges

## 6. Take a public stand and be prepared for criticism, as well as praise

✓ You may find that you are not alone

40A \*\* Houston Chronicle Saturday, April 6, 2002

### Houston Chronicle ILLEGAL VOTERS

Election judges must do a better job at polling places

Voting must be taken as serious business if the representative democracy our nation enjoys is to work as intended. This means that the integrity of the ballot box must never be violated.

That's why the 2,000 votes Harris County Tax Assessor/Collector Paul Bettencourt found to have been cast illegally in last November's local elections and the Houston mayoral runoff in December are serious cause for concern.

Bettencourt, who is charged by law with auditing polling place books, discovered that

1,540 ineligible people were allowed to vote without filling out a required affidavit challenging the status of their voter registration. Another 712 people living outside of Houston were found to have voted in city elections.

Obviously, such illegal votes could change the results of a close election, although apparently there was no indication that such occurred.

But Bettencourt's audit proves the point that election judges must do a better job in making sure that all election laws are followed and that only legal voters vote.

## 7. Be "techno smart"

Data processing best practices

✓ Image all documents

(Statement of Residence forms, voter registration applications, and voter registration certificates returned by mail)


✓ Imaging and indexing of these documents frees up the original document for a processing time of less than 30 days

✓ Index imaged documents for quick reference by voter name, voter registration certificate number, and by voting precinct number



## **Work smarter, not harder**

- ✓ Harris County Tax Office upgraded the Voter Registration system – replacing a 30-year-old mainframe system
- ✓ Communicate with other agencies in the same county or surrounding areas
- ✓ Recommend public policy changes
- ✓ Awaiting HAVA compliance TEAM statewide voting registration system from the Secretary of State Office



**Presented by the Office of  
Paul Bettencourt  
Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector  
& Voter Registrar**

**[www.hcvoter.net](http://www.hcvoter.net)  
713-368-VOTE**



HB 1706 Notes:

Members who spoke against Bill 1706:

- Rep. Lon Burnam
- Rep. Garret Coleman
- Rep. Mark Strauma
- Rep. Norma Chavez
- Rep. Carlos Uresti
- Rep. Dora Olivia
- Rep. Paul Morreno

Members who spoke for Bill 1706:

- Rep. Betty Brown
- Rep. Beverly Woorly
- Rep. Jim Jackson
- Rep. Dan Branch
- Rep. Carter Casteel

Amendment 1 proposed by Norma Chavez stated: people over 50 years old should be exempt to Bill 1706. - motion to table proposed by Mary Denny ----- **motion to table prevails with 84 Ayes/ 59 Nays.**

**Individual Arguments:**

**Lon Burnam:** Over half of voters in his inter-city district are senior citizens that make up the small percentage of people that actually vote in all elections. Also the AARP strongly opposes this bill as it causes an unwanted burden upon them.

1. This bill causes an extra burden on people to go out and obtain/purchase forms of identification; as equally a burden as a poll tax.

*I. Denny finds it hard to believe that in this day and age people do not have one form of photo id or two forms of non-photo id.*

2. It is an extra burden specifically to the poor and/or elderly

*I. Denny says that there are acceptable forms of id for the poor or elderly; there is a lengthy and liberal list of forms of acceptable id to choose from.*

3. Many senior citizens' only form of photo id is their drivers license which many have misplaced or lost by now because they have been told not to drive by their doctors.

*I. Denny claims that the bill is not a poll tax*

*II. Denny believes most people do have a form of photo id*

*Interns Report on the arguments for & against*

HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL

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*III. If you someone does not have a photo id they can sign an affidavit saying that they need assistance and cannot afford one, DPS will provide them with one free of charge.*

**Garnet Coleman:** Feels that this bill will direct people into provisional voting because the bill says roughly that if you do not present your identification with your voter registration card then your vote will be counted as a provisional vote.

*I. It will make sure of less voter fraud*

1. There was a study done that on all of the biggest election days of the last four years there has been no voter fraud.

*I. Denny says that is not entirely true as there have been cases brought to her committee regarding people voting multiple times in different precincts.*

2. People who don't bring id will have to go to Central Counting Agency within 5 days later and verify their identification. If the Central Counting Agency is not having a hard time counting all the provisional ballots they get then why change the law?

*I. It needs to be changed because there are instances that require it*

**Mark Strauma:** Talks about why the bill was filed

1. What is the problem with the current law, has the committee encountered cases of voter fraud?

*I. Yes, there has been cases of people using multiple voter registration cards*

*II. voting in multiple precincts*

*III. cases of dead people voting*

2. There has been a study that studied the essence of dead people casting ballots in Georgia and the secretary of state audited the votes they found that there was only one case of a dead person because he had died before the election.

*I. Denny is aware of the study in Georgia but says the situation in Texas is quite different.*

3. If you believe homeless people should be allowed to vote then how would one go about do that?

*I. They can sign an affidavit stating they need one and get one free from DPS*

*II. They also receive benefits that can be accepted as forms of id that are free of charge.*

4. This bill goes beyond the requirement of the Help America Vote Act

*I. Several other states have followed the same suit and are trying to pass this same bill*

5. With trying to get every registered voter to vote only once per election and since there has not been widespread significant problem with voter fraud and there is a problem with voter turnout, isn't it better to err on side of inclusion?

*I. We must maintain the integrity of the election process*

6. Will you try to apply this bill with regard to voting via mail where you are not required to show id except for the first time?

*I. Not sure at this time*



7. How are we going to transition people on to the new requirement of showing ID?

*I. There will be a huge voter education process implemented to teach people of the new requirement in voting*

8. Will the voter education process come out of state funds?

*I. Private funds are being raised in order to get educate people and get the largest possible turnout.*

**Betty Brown:** Supports the bill with story of a woman who picked up people's registration cards and voted multiple times before they had stopped her.

1. Feels that AARP mis-represented many of the elderly who work at polling stations because they actually know how difficult it is to tame voter fraud.

**Beverly Woorly:** Supports the Bill

1. Not too unfair to ask people to show some form of id when voting
2. Fraudulent votes disenfranchise votes that have been cast legally
3. There are many forms of ID that are acceptable and available through DPS free of charge if the help is required.

**Norma Chavez:** Raises questions and concerns about the bill as well as sets forth amendment 1.

1. Does a union card count as an acceptable form of id?

*I. As long as it is issued by the employer.*

*II. Union cards are usually issued by the union and therefore are probably not acceptable.*

*II. Federal or governmental agencies that issue id's or beneficial cards will be accepted i.e. Medicaid, library card.*

2. Many senior citizens don't have drivers licenses anymore or other forms of photo id

*I. If you don't have photo id, you can use two forms of non-photo id*

3. This is an obstacle people have never had to go through before and it is construed as an act of intimidation

*I. Not if you pride your right to vote and don't want people to steal your vote.*

4. Minorities and 1st generation immigrants have been subjected to laws like proposition 187 in California creating an underclass of people and a fear of government and having to present more than what is minimally necessary.

*I. Immigrants are informed when they get their citizenship what falls under being a U.S. citizen and this voting requirement will also be explained to them.*

5. Some of these people do not even know that they have these benefit cards or forms of id available and so it is a big obstacle to overcome for those people.

6. Elderly people are not accustomed to these requirements and will result in a lack of their voting.

*I. People have to have forms of id to get along in this world and day in age.*

7. Out of respect for people elderly people over 50 years old she proposes amendment 1.

*I. This amendment defeats part of the purpose of the bill*

*II. motion to table the amendment*

8. Voter will be subject to interpretation

*I. No voter will be subject to interpretation and no voter will be turned away.*

9. Will you accept an amendment that requires there to be a list of acceptable documents.

*I. Yes*

**Jim Jackson:** Myself and several members are over 50 and members of AARP and it misrepresents them on this issue.

1. It is not a poll tax if you don't have to pay, state will provide you with id free of charge.

2. Have to have id to do just about anything now

3. Voting is so important it is not unreasonable to have to show id

**Carlos Uresti:** HRO report says that somebody's vote could be thrown out on account of a technicality

*I. No because they can come back and show them a form of id*

1. This bill is inconsistent with the Hallow law

*I. It is not inconsistent, a veteran would have a government-issued photo id.*

2. This bill makes the assumption that everybody carries around or has forms of identification.

3. This may cause less voter turnout while lowering voter fraud

*I. Denny disagrees.*

**Helen Giddings:** agrees with Denny's intentions in this bill but thinks it's more important to make it as easy as possible for the elderly to vote

*I. Its already quite easy for the elderly to vote*

1. It is hard for some people without transportation to obtain an identification card

2. This bill will be harder on older people than younger and the elderly take voting seriously

3. There are people who would try to take away the right of some people to vote

*I. Denny finds that hard to believe*

**Dora Olivo:** Amendment 1 will take the load of the people that Denny is trying to burden with this bill

*I. Denny not trying to burden people*

**Dan Branch:** Some of the best voters and most disciplined voters are senior voters

1. Seniors are concerned about voting on a regular basis and the integrity of the voting process.

2. They are also some of the best workers at the polling stations